Indigenous community housing: Queensland

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In 2018, the coverage of the National Social Housing Survey (NSHS) was expanded to include Indigenous community housing (ICH) tenants for the first time. The sample was taken in Queensland and a face-to-face methodology was used to conduct the survey.

This report presents, for the first time, detailed information on the characteristics and experiences of ICH.

Key findings

- 62% of ICH tenants in Queensland were satisfied with their housing services. This compares to 66% for state owned and managed Indigenous housing program tenants (Australia-wide), and 69% for Indigenous households living in public housing (Australia-wide).

- ICH tenants report many benefits to living in social housing. Across a range of nominated social, economic and health related aspects, at least 9 in 10 tenants agreed that each was a benefit of living in social housing.

- More than half of those who live in Queensland ICH households are children or young adults (under 25 years).

- More than a third of households comprised an extended family of adults and children.

What is the National Social Housing Survey?

The NSHS is a biennial survey undertaken on behalf of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and state and territory governments.

The NSHS collects data about social housing tenants and the dwellings they live in. It also collects information about tenant satisfaction with services provided by their housing providers, and the amenity and location of their home.

QLD

Profile
of Indigenous community housing (ICH) tenants

ICH household size
(all adults and children)

Nearly **30%** comprise **6 or more people**

Household composition

Nearly **8 in 10** ICH tenants **live with children** in their household

Household location

More than half of ICH households live in *Remote* or *Very remote* areas*

Tenant satisfaction

6 in 10 ICH tenants were **satisfied with services** from their housing organisation

* Based on dwelling location and ABS remoteness index of *Remote* or *Very remote.*

AIHW

There are 2 main Indigenous-specific social housing programs in Australia:

Indigenous community housing (ICH)

This housing is owned or managed by an Indigenous community housing organisation or, in some cases, remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils. These bodies can directly manage the dwellings or sublease tenancy management services to the relevant state/territory housing authority or another organisation. ICH is available to households with at least 1 Indigenous member.

State owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH)

These dwellings, managed by state and territory governments, are aimed at low to moderate income households with at least 1 member who identifies as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Other programs

The other main social housing programs—available to all eligible Australians, including those who identify as Indigenous—are **Public Housing (PH)** and **Community Housing (CH)**.

What is social housing?

Social housing programs provide rental housing to tenants at below market rates. Each state, territory or housing organisation determines its own priorities for allocating its social housing stock according to need. A common criterion is being a low to moderate income household. Further, two of the main programs are targeted to Indigenous Australians (see box, left).

Social housing dwellings

At 30 June 2018, there were around 436,200 dwellings in the main social housing programs (AIHW 2019a). Around 7% of these are in two Indigenous-specific programs, comprising:

- nearly 17,500 ICH dwellings. Of these, 5,244 (30%) were in Queensland

- 14,700 SOMIH dwellings.

Understanding social housing tenants

For the PH, CH and SOMIH programs, detailed information about dwellings, households and tenants is published annually in publications such as Housing Assistance in Australia (AIHW 2018a, AIHW 2019a) and various NSHS reports (AIHW 2017, AIHW 2018b, AIHW 2018c). To date these publications have presented very little or no information about ICH tenants and their housing. This is because the AIHW National Housing Assistance Data Repository holds only limited ICH information (high level dwelling counts with limited geographical and bedroom information) (AIHW 2019a).
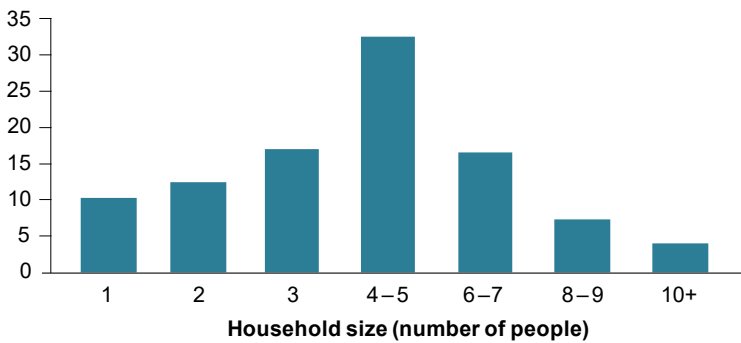

ICH in the 2018 NSHS

2018 was the first NSHS to collect information about ICH tenants, their households and the dwellings they live in. This new coverage begins to address an important information gap for the nearly 17,500 ICH dwellings Australia-wide and the tenants who live in them. Around 30% of ICH dwellings are in Queensland, where the 2018 ICH sample was collected.

A face-to-face methodology was used to conduct the survey. The total sample was 500 households, more than half of which were in remote locations. See the *NSHS 2018 methodological report* for the Queensland communities that were sampled, and other information about the methodology. Responses from tenants were weighted by remoteness to produce estimates for the Queensland ICH population. The proportions presented in this report are based on weighted responses.

What can the NSHS tell us about ICH tenants in Queensland?

ICH households: size, composition and overcrowding

Proportion of households (%)

Household size (number of people): bar chart values — 1: ~10, 2: ~12.5, 3: ~17, 4–5: ~32.5, 6–7: ~16.5, 8–9: ~7, 10+: ~4

Household size (number of people)

4 in 10 were living in an **overcrowded dwelling***

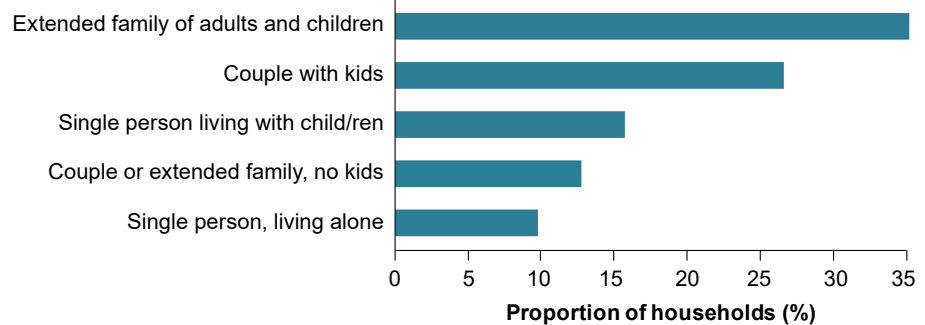* Overcrowding is measured against the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (AIHW 2019b)

"Not a big enough house and waiting for a transfer"
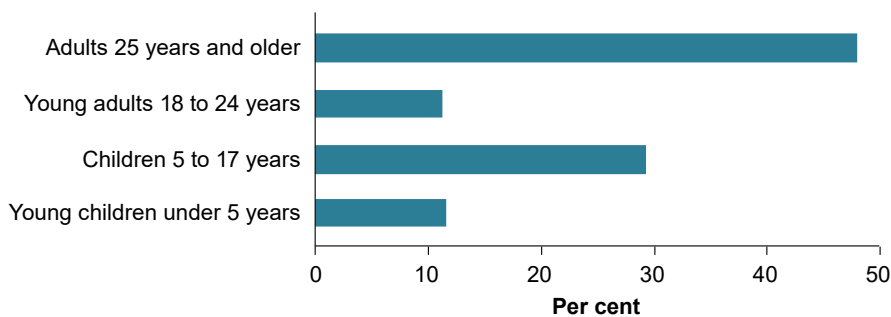
ICH
Comments from tenants

"Family and friends live here"

"Me and my sister [live here]"

ICH
Comments from tenants

Household composition bar chart:
- Extended family of adults and children: ~35
- Couple with kids: ~26.5
- Single person living with child/ren: ~16
- Couple or extended family, no kids: ~13
- Single person, living alone: ~10

Proportion of households (%)

Demographic profile of ICH household members

Bar chart:
- Adults 25 years and older: ~48
- Young adults 18 to 24 years: ~11
- Children 5 to 17 years: ~29
- Young children under 5 years: ~11

Per cent

Household members **18 years and over** were:

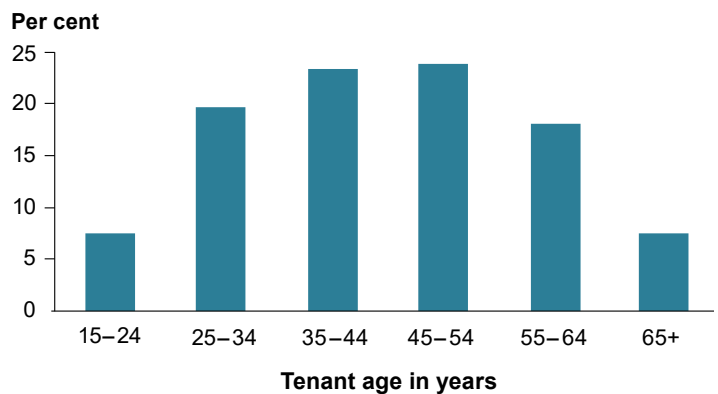**56%** female

44% male

The NSHS provides extra information about the individual who answered the survey on behalf of the household

ICH tenants:

80% had **lived in social housing for more than 15 years**

46% were **employed****

8 in 10 (78%) have **completed Year 10.** Of these, 20% completed a post school qualification, and another 40% completed up to Year 11 or 12.

** Of those aged 15–64.

Per cent

Tenant age bar chart:
- 15–24: ~7.5
- 25–34: ~19.5
- 35–44: ~23.5
- 45–54: ~24
- 55–64: ~18
- 65+: ~7.5

Tenant age in years

Indigenous social housing populations covered by the NSHS, by remoteness

ICH households are more remote on average than other Indigenous households that were covered by the 2018 NSHS.

■ Major cities ■ Inner regional ■ Outer regional ■ Remote ■ Very remote
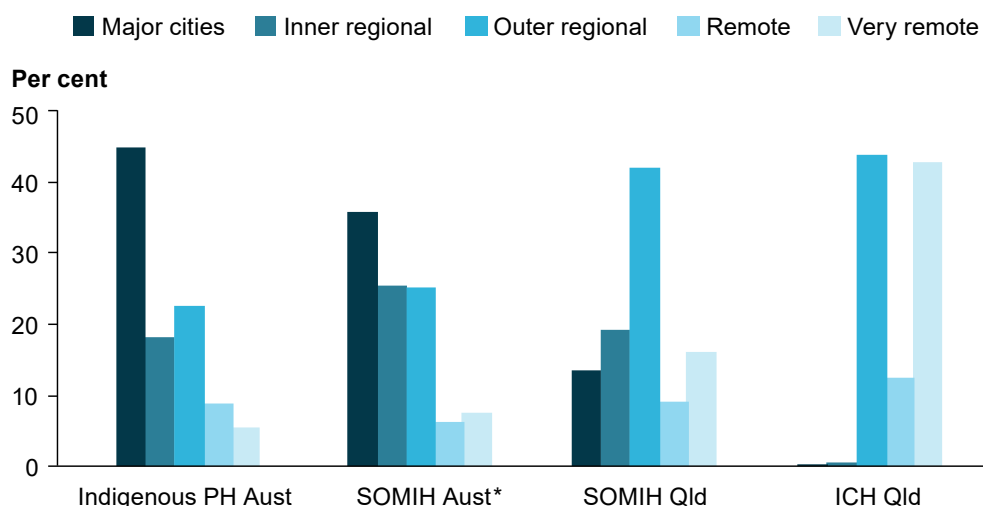
Source: AIHW National Housing Assistance Data Repository.

* Victoria, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory do not have SOMIH programs. SOMIH in the Northern Territory is not covered by the NSHS

Benefits of living in social housing for ICH tenants

ICH tenants agree there are many benefits to living in social housing. Across a range of nominated social, economic and health related aspects, a high proportion of tenants agreed to the proposition of social housing providing each benefit.

- Feel part of the local community (99%)
- Able to manage rent/money better (98%)
- Able to continue living in this area (97%)
- Enjoy better health (96%)
- Feel more settled (96%)

- Feel more able to improve job situation (90%)
- Feel more able to start or continue education/training (89%)
- Have better access to public transport (39%)

Amenities meeting the needs of ICH households (where rated as important, %)

Amenity	ICH
Water efficiency	96
Ease of access and entry	92
Energy efficiency	92
Safety/security of home	87
Privacy of home	84
Car parking	80
Size of dwelling	79
Thermal comfort	77
Number of bedrooms	77
Safety/security outside of home	75
Yard space and fencing	74
Modifications for special needs	69

Proximity to services, where rated as important

For Queensland ICH, 99% of tenants reported that their proximity to their family and friends met their needs. Location with respect to a range of other services typically met the needs of around 9 in 10 tenants. However, only 47% of ICH tenants reported that their access to public transport met their needs, consistent with the remoteness of most ICH homes.
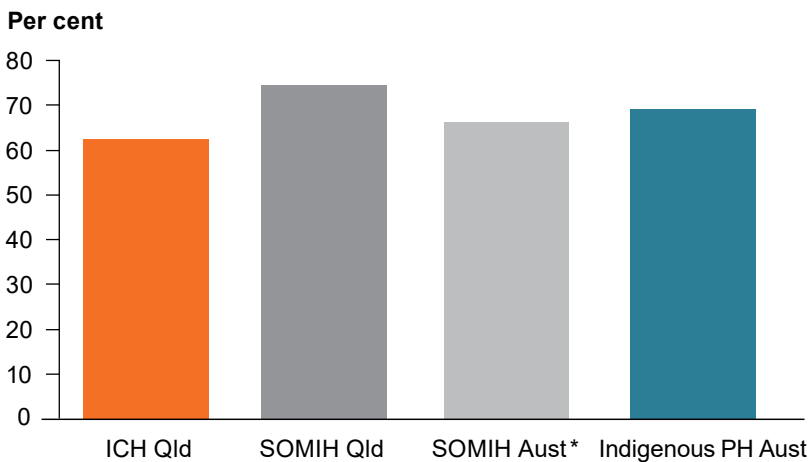
'All good services… very good area to live.'

ICH Comments from tenants

Tenant satisfaction

Satisfaction with housing services: NSHS

The NSHS 2018 captured 3 types of tenant satisfaction: overall satisfaction, satisfaction with day-to-day maintenance services and satisfaction with emergency maintenance services. The satisfaction rates presented below are an estimate of the proportion of tenants who are satisfied or very satisfied with services from their housing organisation.

Overall satisfaction, by Indigenous social housing population (%)

Per cent

[Bar chart showing percentages:
ICH Qld: ~62
SOMIH Qld: ~74
SOMIH Aust*: ~66
Indigenous PH Aust: ~69]

* Victoria, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory do not have SOMIH programs. SOMIH in the Northern Territory is not covered by the NSHS

ICH tenants, Queensland, 2018

QLD

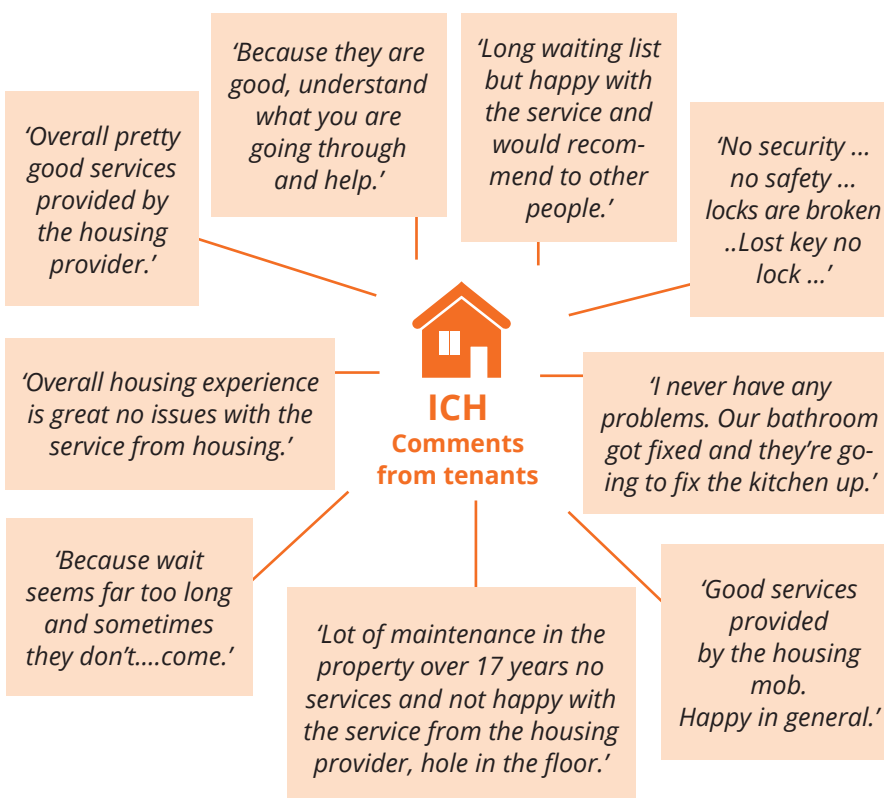Overall satisfaction with housing services
62%

Satisfaction with day-to-day maintenance services
53%

Satisfaction with emergency maintenance services
62%

Quotes from ICH tenants illustrate their satisfaction with services from their housing organisation:

'Overall pretty good services provided by the housing provider.'

'Because they are good, understand what you are going through and help.'

'Long waiting list but happy with the service and would recommend to other people.'

'No security ... no safety ... locks are broken ..Lost key no lock ...'

ICH
Comments from tenants

'Overall housing experience is great no issues with the service from housing.'

'I never have any problems. Our bathroom got fixed and they're going to fix the kitchen up.'

'Because wait seems far too long and sometimes they don't....come.'

'Lot of maintenance in the property over 17 years no services and not happy with the service from the housing provider, hole in the floor.'

'Good services provided by the housing mob. Happy in general.'

Understanding tenant satisfaction

Recent national findings from the NSHS shed light on those factors most closely related to tenant satisfaction in other social housing programs. These showed that, at a national level, living with major structural problems in the home, not having access to 7 nominated basic facilities in working order, or having lived in social housing for long periods were each independently associated with lower tenant satisfaction (AIHW 2019b). For SOMIH tenants, overcrowding was also associated with lower levels of satisfaction. These relationships held after accounting for a range of demographic and housing-related factors. For details on these findings, including the list of factors that were included in the analysis, refer to Chapter 2 of the *NSHS 2018 Key results* report.

Dwelling condition in the NSHS

The NSHS collects two measures related to dwelling condition—the number of *working facilities* in the home and the number of *major structural problems*.

Facilities listed in the NSHS are: cooking facilities, refrigerator, bath or shower, washing machine, kitchen sink, toilet and laundry tub.

Structural problems listed in the NSHS are: rising damp, major cracks in walls/floors, sinking/moving foundations, sagging floors, walls/windows not square, wood rot/termite damage, major electrical problems, major plumbing problems and major roof defect.

Key factors in tenant satisfaction: ICH Queensland

The key factors in tenant satisfaction identified more broadly in the NSHS can inform further exploration of satisfaction for Queensland ICH tenants. By examining the prevalence of these key factors, we might better understand the differences in satisfaction observed between Queensland ICH tenants and other social housing populations.

More than half of Queensland ICH tenants reported living in dwellings with at least 1 structural problem and over a third reported lacking at least one working facility. In terms of time spent living in social housing, around 4 out of 5 tenants said they had lived in social housing for at least 16 years.
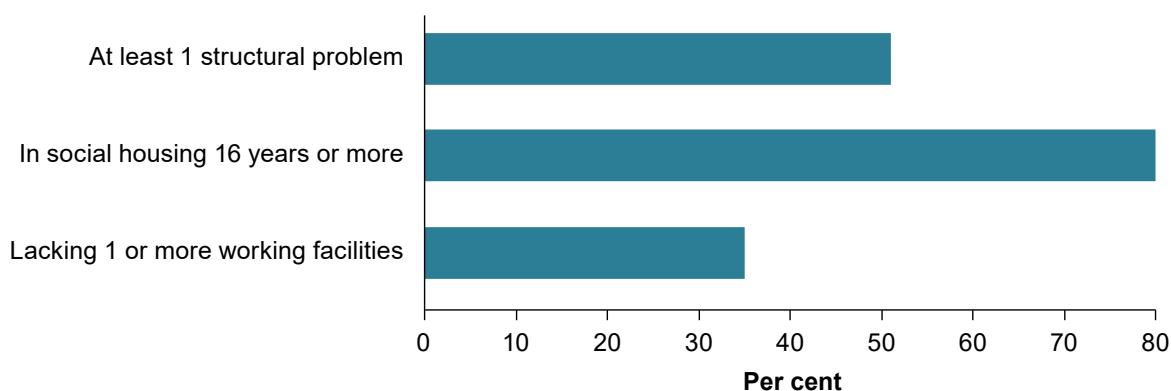
'They've come to look at the stove but never been able to find the fault. Been here 2 years and never had a stove.'

'Waiting 2 years for hot water switch to be fixed to turn on the hot water...hot water tank is switched off.'

'Been waiting for 33 years for an update, they say they will fix stuff but don't.'

'Lived here since 2005 but have never had hot water....we always boil a jug for hot water.'

'I need my home to be renovated as it's getting old.'

ICH
Comments from tenants

Satisfaction and dwelling condition: ICH Queensland

The satisfaction rate for Queensland ICH tenants was higher for those tenants living in a dwelling with no structural problems, compared to those living with major structural problems. A similar pattern was seen for tenants who had access to all 7 nominated working facilities, compared to those without.
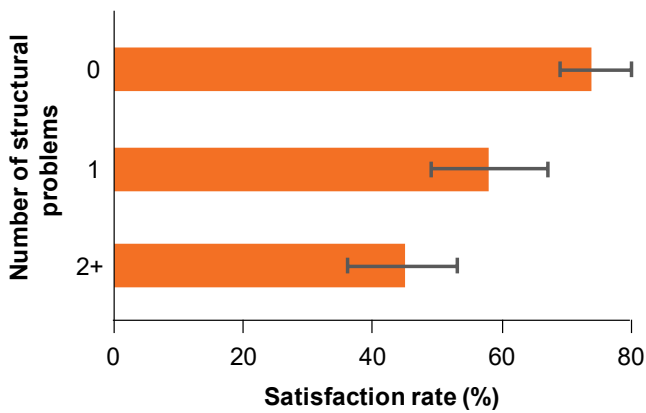

Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.
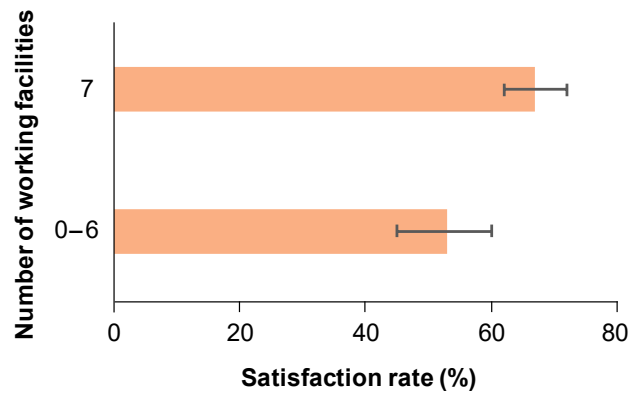
Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Overcrowding and satisfaction: ICH Queensland

Overcrowding does not seem to have a clear relationship to satisfaction among this cohort, as tenants who lived in overcrowded dwellings had a satisfaction rate similar to tenants who lived in adequately utilised dwellings.
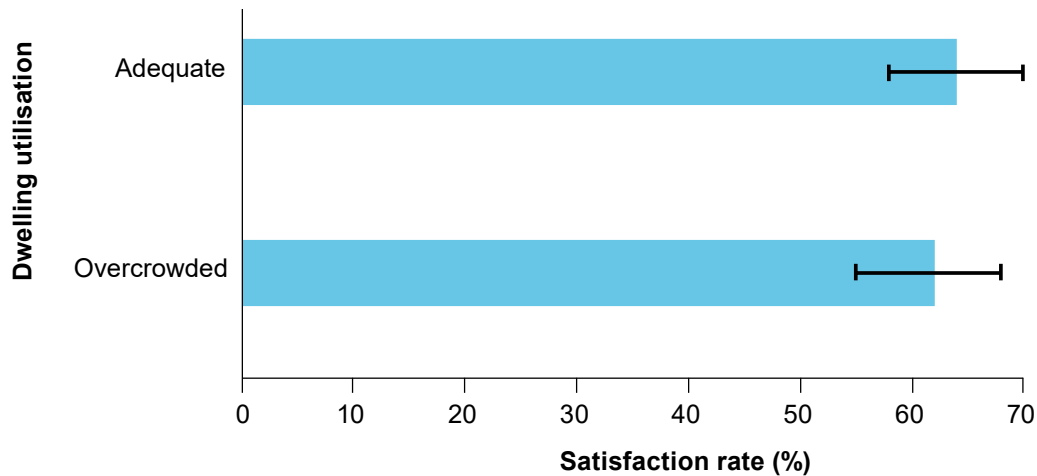
Conclusion

The 2018 NSHS has provided new insights about ICH tenants, their households and the homes in which they live. The successful collection of this survey for this largely remote population demonstrates the feasibility and value of using the NSHS to collect more information about the ICH social housing program in future. An expansion into different states and territories would improve the insights for ICH populations outside of Queensland.
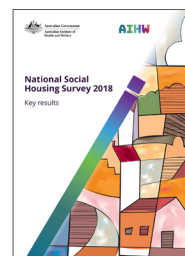
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Find out more

This In focus report is part of the NSHS 2018 release, which includes a range of publications and supplementary data tables.

For more information see www.aihw.gov.au/reports/housing-assistance/ national-social-housing-survey-2018-key-results.

National Social Housing Survey 2018: Key results

Stronger evidence,
better decisions,
improved health and welfare